

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 1096

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, UN, BY
SUBJECT: BURUNDI'S UN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

REF: STATE 292131

1. ON NOVEMBER 30, BEFORE RECEIPT REFTEL, I CALLED ON FATHER BARAKANA AND MADE PITCH APPROXIMATELY ALONG LINES OF PARAS 2 AND 3 REFTEL. I DID NOT WANT TO MAKE IT SEEM THAT USG IS SPONSOR OF MIKANAGU. HENCE, WHILE I DID PAY TRIBUTE TO HIS ACHIEVEMENT IN REDUCING FRICTIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND BURUNDI OVER MULTILATERAL ISSUES, AND WHILE I DID NOTE THAT IT WAS NOT SENSIBLE ADMINISTRATION TO REMOVE SOMEONE JUST AFTER HE HAD SUCCESSFULLY BROKEN INTO NEW JOB, I LAID THE MAIN STRESS ON SCOTCHING THE APPOINTMENT OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE CERTAIN TO ACT RETROGRESSIVELY. GIVEN BARAKANA'S DEEP HOSTILITY TO SIMBANANIYE, I WAS QUITE FRANK IN RECALLING THE LATTER'S ANTI-WESTERN ORIENTATION, WHICH COULD BE GIVEN FREE PLAY IN THE NEW YORK ENVIRONMENT, WHERE A BURUNDIAN UN MISSION CHIEF INEVITABLY HAD SUBSTANTIAL LEEWAY ON MOST ISSUES, AS WELL AS A CONSIDERABLE SCOPE FOR INTRIGUE, IF HE WERE SO INCLINED.

2. FATHER BARAKANA SHARED ALL OF MY CONCERNS, THOUGH, CLEARLY, HIS MAIN INTEREST BEFORE OUR CONVERSATION HAD BEEN TO REJOICE AT THE PROSPECT THAT SIMBANANIYE WOULD BE OUT OF BURUNDI AND HENCE UNABLE TO SCHEME AND PLOT AT HOME. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT IT WAS DOUBTFUL WHETHER ANY WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRY WOULD AGREE
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TO SIMBANANIYE'S ASSIGNMENT THERE, AND THAT THIS PROBLEM OF

ACCEPTABILITY DID NOT ARISE WITH THE UN. I SUGGESTED THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF BURUNDI EMBASSIES IN COMMUNIST AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHERE SIMBANANIYE MIGHT FEEL AT HOME, BUT BARAKANA DID NOT BELIEVE THEY WERE IN THE CARDS.

3. BARAKANA DID NOT MAKE ANY PROMISES TO ME ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT TRY TO DO. I ASSUME THAT HE WILL BE LOATH TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT END UP LEAVING SIMBANANIYE WITHIN BURUNDI, BUT I SUSPECT THAT HE WILL MAKE DISCREET INQUIRIES ABOUT THE STATE OF PLAY ON THE APPOINTMENT, AND THEN MAY POSSIBLY POINT OUT THAT THE UN ASSIGNMENT COULD BE A CONTINUING IRRITANT IN BURUNDI'S RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES.

4. IN FACT, FROM WHAT WE HEAR, THE APPOINTMENT OF SIMBANANIYE (AND OTHER OLD REGIME PEOPLE, SUCH AS EX-JUSTICE MINISTER MINANI TO BRUSSELS, AS WELL AS EX-FONMIN BIMAZUBUTE AND EX-FONOFF DIRGEN MANGONA) TO UNSPECIFIED EMBASSIES) HAS RAISED A HORNET'S NEST WITH THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. PRIMIN NZAMBIMANA IS LEADING THE FACTION IN FAVOR OF THE NOMINATIONS, PERHAPS ARGUING THAT IT IS BEST TO AVOID RECRIMINATIONS OVER THE PAST BY GETTING CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES OUT OF BURUNDI (THOUGH MANY WOULD SUSPECT THAT HE IS TRYING TO HELP HIS CLAN BROTHERS FROM MATANA, SIMBANANIYE AND MANGONA). PRESIDENT BAGAZA IS SAID TO BE LEADING THE OPPOSITION, ARGUING THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE POSTED ABROAD UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN A CAREFUL CHECK OF HIS BACKGROUND, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO CORRUPTION DURING THE MICOMBERO ERA. JUSTICE MINISTER MANWANGIRA IS REPORTED EVEN TO BE THREATENING TO RESIGN OVER THIS ISSUE.

5. WE DO NOT KNOW THE CURRENT FACTIONAL BALANCE, BUT THE OPPOSITION HAS AT LEAST BEEN STRONG ENOUGH TO PREVENT THE ISSUANCE OF THE DECREE ON THE APPOINTMENTS, WHICH HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 30. I DO NOT THINK THAT IT WOULD BE AT ALL AMISS FOR YOU TO CALL IN AMBASSADOR NZEYIMANA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO LAY OUT THE CASE AGAINST SIMBANANIYE, WHILE STRESSING THAT OUR CONCERN FOR THE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS MAKES IT INCUMBENT ON US TO CONVEY OUR INFORMAL VIEWS. NZEYIMANA WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REPORT BACK TO BUJUMBURA, AND I WOULD SUPPOSE THAT THE FONOFF WOULD INFORM BOTH THE PRIMIN AND PRESIDENT, IF THE ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED BEFOREHAND. THIS WOULD SOMEHOW INVOLVE

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US IN AN INTERNAL SQUABBLE, BUT IT MIGHT ALSO STRENGTHEN BAGAZA'S HAND WITH ANOTHER RATIONAL ARGUMENT.

6. WE ALSO HAD THE THOUGHT OF APPROACHING PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER NYABOYA, WHO IS NOT ONLY CLOSE PERSONALLY TO BAGAZA, BUT WHO, AS AN EMPLOYEE UNTIL LAST MONTH OF THE UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN NEW YORK, COULD ADD HIS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD OR EVIL WHICH A UN MISSION CHIEF CAN PRODUCE.

UNFORTUNATELY, NYABOYA SPENT LAST WEEK IN BRUSSELS AND IS NOT BACK. SINCE HE OBTAINED A VISA FOR THE U.S. FROM US BEFORE HE LEFT, HE MAY HAVE HEADED BACK TO NEW YORK TO CLOSE OUT HIS AFFAIRS THERE. IF SO, PERHAPS HE COULD BE CONTACTED THERE ON THE PROBLEM. IF HE WERE WILLING TO DO SOMETHING, HE WOULD HAVE TO FIND A WAY OF GETTING PERSONALLY TO BAGAZA AT LONG DISTANCE.

7. IF THE FIGHT HERE DRAGS ON A FEW MORE DAYS, I SHOULD HAVE SOME CHANCE TO SPEAK INFORMALLY TO OTHER OFFICIALS AND FELLOW WESTERN DIPLOMATS ABOUT THE PROBLEM, SINCE A NUMBER OF BOTH GROUPS WILL BE AT MY RESIDENCE ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 2. HOWEVER, WE WILL OF COURSE BE ALERT TO KEEP THIS FROM SEEMING TO LET THIS BECOME AN ISSUE OF BURUNDI'S SOVEREIGNTY AND PRESTIGE, BY EMPHASIZING OUR PREDOMINANT CONCERN WITH THE CONTINUED HARMONY OF OUR STEADILY IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS.

MARK

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